



PERFORMANCE-BASED QUALITY ASSURANCE SURVEILLANCE PLAN

INTRODUCTION

This Performance-Based Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan (QASP) has been developed pursuant to the requirements of the Performance-Based Statement of Work. This plan sets forth procedures and guidelines that the Department of Education will use in evaluating the technical performance of the contractor. A copy of this plan will be furnished to the contractor so that the contractor will be aware of the methods that the Government will employ in evaluating performance on this contract and address any concerns that the contractor may have prior to initiating work. (All percentages indicated shall be quantitatively measured on a yearly basis).

PURPOSE OF THE QASP

The QASP is intended to accomplish the following:

- Define the roles and responsibilities of participating Government officials;
- Define the types of work to be performed with required end results;
- Describe the evaluation methods that will be employed by the Government in assessing the contractor's performance;
- Provide copies of the quality assurance monitoring forms that will be used by the Government in documenting and evaluating the contractor's performance; and
- Describe the process of performance documentation.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

The COTR will participate in assessing the quality of the contractor's performance. His/Her roles and responsibilities are described as follows:

The Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (COTR) will be responsible for monitoring, assessing, recording, and reporting on the technical performance of the contractor on a day-to-day basis. S/he will have the primary responsibility for completing Quality Assurance Monitoring Forms which s/he will use to document the inspection and evaluation of the contractor's work performance. It is extremely important for the COTR to establish and maintain a team-oriented line of communication with the contractor's project manager (PM) and the PM's office staff in order to perform her/his monitoring functions. The COTR, Contracting Officer (CO), and PM must work together as a team to ensure that required work is accomplished in an efficient and proper manner. Meetings should be held on a regular basis in order to resolve serious problems. Less serious problems should be discussed and resolved on an impromptu basis.

The Contracting Officer (CO) has overall responsibility for overseeing the contractor's

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performance. S/he will also be responsible for the day-to-day monitoring of the contractor's performance in the areas of contract compliance, contract administration, cost control and property control; reviewing the COTR's assessment of the contractor's performance; and resolving all differences between the COTR's version and the contractor's version. The CO may call upon the expertise of other Government individuals as required. The Contracting Officer's procurement authorities include the following:

- FINAL authority for any decisions which produce an increase or decrease in the scope of the contract;
- FINAL authority for any actions subject to the "Changes" clause;
- FINAL authority for any decision to be rendered under the "Disputes" clause;
- FINAL authority for negotiation and determination of indirect rates to be applied to the contract;
- FINAL authority to approve the substitution or replacement of the Project Manager and other key personnel;
- FINAL authority to approve the contractor's invoices for payment, subject to the Limitation of Costs clause and the Limitation of Funds clause;
- FINAL authority to monitor and enforce Department of Labor promulgated labor requirements;
- Authority to arrange for and supervise Quality Assurance activities under this contract;
- FINAL authority to approve the contractor's Quality Control Program;
- Signatory authority for the issuance of all modifications to the contract.

IDENTIFICATION OF THE TYPES OF WORK TO BE PERFORMED

This contract calls for the contractor to carry out data collection efforts for an international study of instructional practices for the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. The work to be performed for the study under this contract falls into one or more of the general categories listed below:

1. Main survey data collection
2. Data processing (transcribing, translating, coding)
3. Data analysis
4. Data reporting
5. Compile public-use database
6. Compile restricted-use database
7. Prepare publications, briefing materials, informational materials
8. Prepare publications for posting on NCES web site
9. Arrange and conduct meetings of Steering Committees, representatives panel, and other consultants
10. Support press briefings activities
11. Maintain customer/participant support telephone line

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METHODOLOGIES TO BE USED TO MONITOR THE CONTRACTORS PERFORMANCE

Even though the Government, through its COTR, will be monitoring the contractor's performance on a continuing basis, the volume of tasks performed by the contractor makes technical inspections of every task and step impractical. Accordingly, the Department of Education will use a quality-assurance review process to monitor the contractor's performance under this contract. The contractor's performance will be evaluated by the COTR in terms of a specific set of products and activities, according to three categories: "superior," "acceptable," and "unacceptable." The criteria for each of these performance levels are outlined below. All products produced by or activities performed by the contractor shall meet the level of "acceptable," at a minimum. For each task that the contractor performs at an "unacceptable" level, a deduction of \$5,000 shall be taken from the amount of the contract, as outlined below.

In general, the work will be evaluated in terms of how well the requirements of the contract are satisfied, the extent to which the work performed follows the approach found in the contractor's technical proposal, clarity of documentation, and timeliness of scheduled task accomplishment. At the discretion of the COTR or the Contracting Office or Specialist, other government officials approved by the Contracting Officer or Specialist may be asked to evaluate a particular deliverable or set of deliverables.

QUALITY ASSURANCE REPORTING FORMS

The COTR will use two quality assurance monitoring forms (Exhibits B & C) to document and evaluate the contractor's performance under this contract. The two forms, when completed, will document the COTR's understanding of contractor requirements, what was actually completed, and the impact or consequences of what was not completed.

The COTR will evaluate each event in accordance with the following definitions of contractor performance:

Superior -a level of performance which exceeds the minimum standards of performance;

Acceptable -an acceptable level of performance which meets the minimum standards of performance; or

Unacceptable -a level of performance which is not acceptable and which fails to meet the minimum standards of performance.

The COTR must substantiate all tasks which s/he judges to be indicative of "superior" or "unacceptable" performance. Performance at the "acceptable" level is expected from the contractor. Performance at all three (3) levels will be evaluated.

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The COTR will forward copies of all completed QA monitoring forms to the CO and contractor by the close of business on the days the forms were prepared. The contractor is required to respond in writing to any negative QA monitoring form(s) within 5 working days after receipt of the form(s).

ANALYSIS OF SURVEILLANCE RESULTS

The CO will review each QA monitoring form prepared by the COTR. When appropriate, the CO may investigate the event further to determine if all the facts and circumstances surrounding the event were considered in the COTR opinions outlined on the forms. The CO will immediately discuss every event receiving a substandard rating with the contractor to assure that corrective action is promptly initiated.

At the end of every year, the COTR will prepare a written report for the CO summarizing the overall results of his/her surveillance of the contractor's performance during the previous months. This report will become part of the formal QA documentation.

Sample 7 Data Collection Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan #2

QUALITY ASSURANCE SURVEILLANCE PLAN

The products or activities that will be used to evaluate contractor performance, and the deductions tied to each, are listed below. Performance deductions for these products or activities will be taken only once, when the task is completed.

A. PERFORMING UNDER CONDITIONS OF EMERGENCY SPEED

Contract Requirement: Task 1.11

Performance Indicator: At the request of the COTR, the contractor shall perform activities under conditions of emergency speed.

Primary Method of Surveillance: COTR review of timeliness of performance of task or delivery of product, and quality of product or quality of performance.

Standard of Performance: Requests to perform activities under conditions of emergency speed shall be completed depending upon one of four priority levels, as requested by the COTR, following the definitions below. Each request from the COTR to perform under emergency speed shall be evaluated based on the contractor's submission of a product or completion of a task by the time period indicated by the priority level assigned at the time of the request. The contractor shall meet, at a minimum, standards of quality and thoroughness established in the contract, even under conditions of emergency speed.

- Priority 1: within 24 hours of request
- Priority 2: within 72 hours of request
- Priority 3: within 5 working days of request
- Priority 4: within 10 working days of request

Evaluation Criteria:

Unacceptable Performance :

- 1) the task is not completed or the product is not delivered within the specified timeframe;
- 2) the task is poorly carried out such that the COTR or NCES/ED must intervene to complete the task or do it well;
- 3) the product is of poor quality, lacking structure, failing to meet the objectives specified by the COTR, or requiring substantial revisions;

Acceptable Performance :

- 1) the task is completed on time, or the product is delivered on time;
- 2) the task is completed to the satisfaction of the COTR;
- 3) the product is of generally good quality, requiring no more than usual amounts

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of revision;

Superior Performance :

In addition to meeting the criteria for acceptable performance:

- 1) the task is completed or the product is delivered ahead of schedule; or
- 2) the product is of high quality, requiring very limited revision or no revision.

B. OBTAINING LEGAL PERMISSION TO ALLOW COLLECTION OF PUBLIC-USE VIDEOTAPES

Contract Requirement: Task 6.1

Performance Indicator: The contractor shall obtain all necessary and legal releases, from participants and/or their legal guardians if under the age of consent, to allow the public viewing of the public-use videotapes collected for this study, and shall document this process for the COTR. Legal release forms shall be collected in jurisdictions where legally required.

Primary Method of Surveillance: COTR review of legally signed release forms, and review of contractor documentation of this process.

Standard of Performance: The contractor shall obtain and supply a copy to the COTR of all necessary and legal release forms, from participants and/or their legal guardians if under the age of consent, to allow the public viewing of public-use videotapes. A legal release form shall be obtained from each participant in each videotaped designated as a public-use videotape. Furthermore, the contractor shall thoroughly document this process for the COTR.

Evaluation Criteria:

Unacceptable Performance :

- 1) legal releases are not obtained from each and every participant in a videotape designated as public-use, or the contractor fails to document why such a release is not legally required in the jurisdiction in which the videotaping takes place;
- 2) contractor fails to fully document the legal requirements for obtaining legal release forms for the public viewing of the public-use videotapes in each participating jurisdiction; or
- 3) contractor fails to supply to the COTR all requested documentation (copies of all release forms; detailed documentation of process and legal requirements in each jurisdiction)

Acceptable Performance :

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- 1) contractor obtains all legal and necessary release forms from each and every participant in a public-use videotape;
- 2) contractor supplies the COTR with all requested documentation, including copies of all release forms;
- 3) contractor provides to the COTR detailed documentation of the process of obtaining release forms and the legal requirements for collecting data for public release in each participating jurisdiction;

Superior Performance :

In addition to meeting the criteria for acceptable performance,

- 1) copies of all release forms and the detailed documentation of the process is submitted within 1 month of completion of data collection.

C. ANALYSES IN SUPPORT OF U.S. NATIONAL TIMSS-R SURVEY REPORT

Contract Requirement: Task 12

Performance Indicator: The contractor shall supply no more than 20 tables from the TIMSS Videotape-R study for inclusion in the U.S. national TIMSS-R report.

Primary Method of Surveillance: NCES adjudication

Standard of Performance: The contractor shall prepare no more than 20 tables of results from the TIMSS Videotape-R study for inclusion in the U.S. national TIMSS-R study report. The topic of each table will be suggested by the COTR, in consultation with the contractor. All requested tables shall be submitted by the contractor, in draft form, 5 months before the scheduled release date of the U.S. national TIMSS-R study report. Final copies of all requested tables shall be submitted 4 months prior to the release date of the U.S. national TIMSS-R study report.

Evaluation Criteria:

Unacceptable Performance :

- 1) contractor fails to supply the requested number of tables of results, up to the agreed upon limit of 20;
- 2) contractor fails to supply the requested tables of results by the established deadline;
- 3) contractor fails to supply revised versions of the requested tables by the established deadline;
- 4) analyses presented in tables of results is poor, failing to meet minimum statistical standards as required by NCES; or

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- 5) presentation of data in tables is poor, resulting in great difficulty in interpreting results or understanding point of table, and requiring extensive revision of tables for presentation purposes.

Acceptable Performance :

- 10 contractor submits to the COTR the requested number of tables of results, up to the agreed upon limit of 20;
- 20 contractor submits to the COTR the requested tables of results by the established deadline;
- 30 contractor submits revised versions of the requested tables by the established deadline;
- 40 analyses presented in tables of results meet acceptable NCES statistical standards; and
- 50 presentation of data in tables is good, resulting in little trouble in understanding point of table or the interpretation of results, and requiring little revision of tables for presentation purposes

Superior Performance :

In addition to meeting the criteria for acceptable performance,

- 10 presentation of data in tables is excellent, making it relatively easy for any reader to properly read and interpret data; or
- 20 very little or no revision of tables is required.

Sample 7 Data Collection Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan #2

D. QUARTERLY STUDY PROGRESS REPORTS

Contract Requirement: Task 1.3.1

Performance Indicator: The contractor shall accurately and clearly report on the progress of the study, as outlined in the contract, on a quarterly basis.

Primary Method of Surveillance: COTR fiscal year summary review of quarterly status reports.

Standard of Performance: Each quarterly report shall be provided by the contractor with the submission of each invoice. Each quarterly report shall be evaluated in terms of how well the requirements of the contract are satisfied, the clarity of documentation, and the overall quality of the deliverable.

Quality of Work Performed: 1 status report per quarter.

Evaluation Criteria:

Unacceptable Performance :

- 10 the report is unstructured or is not concise;
- 20 the report does not describe the tasks undertaken;
- 30 the report does not describe progress on tasks;
- 40 the report does not describe upcoming work description;
- 50 the report does not describe the problems encountered; or
- 60 the report does not report on budget status.

Acceptable Performance :

- 10 the report is between 2-10 pages in length;
- 20 the report is well structured and comprehensible;
- 30 the report clearly details progress of the study;
- 40 the report describes upcoming work; and
- 50 the report clearly details budget status.

Superior Performance :

In addition to meeting the criteria for acceptable performance:

- 10 the report is concise and informative; and
- 20 if necessary, the report concisely points out potential future problems, reasonable alternative and/or solutions to resolve those potential future problems, and a suggested revised plan of action.

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Sample 7 Data Collection Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan #2

QUALITY ASSURANCE MONITORING FORM

WORK TASK: _____

SURVEY PERIOD: _____

METHOD OF SURVEILLANCE: COTR REVIEW

EVALUATION OF CONTRACTORS PERFORMANCE: _____

NARRATIVE DISCUSSION OF CONTRACTORS PERFORMANCE DURING
SURVEY PERIOD:

PREPARED BY: _____

DATE: _____

QUALITY ASSURANCE MONITORING FORM

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WORK TASK: _____

SURVEY PERIOD: _____

METHOD OF SURVEILLANCE: NCES ADJUDICATION REVIEW

EVALUATION OF CONTRACTORS PERFORMANCE: _____

NARRATIVE DISCUSSION OF CONTRACTORS PERFORMANCE DURING
SURVEY PERIOD:

PREPARED BY: _____

DATE: _____